

Collective action will achieve gains for gender equity, IWD event hears

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Women's struggles for equality were acknowledged at an International Women's Day morning tea at Federation's Surry Hills headquarters this morning.

International Women's Day provides an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge women's progress towards gender equality in terms of social, political and economic rights that have been achieved through collective action.

Senior Vice President Joan Lemaire outlined the history of International Women's Day, which started as a commemoration of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested against dangerous working conditions and low pay.

She also told of the women who went on strike in Russia in 1917 to protest against deplorable pay and conditions. Their demand for "bread and peace" was supported by other workers in mass strikes. The Czar abdicated and women won the right to vote.

In Australia the first celebration of International Women's Day was in 1928 in Sydney's Domain, with demands for equal pay.

Ms Lemaire pointed to Federation's proud history in campaigns for equal pay, gender equity and women's rights, achieved through the collective action of members.

She urged everyone to work together with other unions and our communities to continue the campaign for gender equality.